

A D D S O M E

# MUSIC

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## Comment

Having accosted Brian Wilson prior to a concert this year I was struck for some time afterward with the poignancy of his demeanor -and the meaning of it. In many ways Brian has the instincts he has always used. That is hopeful and also simply gratifying. The humor, the humility, the concern and the lack of sophistication are intact. Upon mentioning Add Some Music his eyes lit up in a boyish way even as he receded somewhat. "Do you have a copy on you?" It became immediately evident that Hemingway's beard had nothing on Brian's orangish, arty bush, which complemented an eager mind. His gross motor movements told another story, however, with abrupt, nervous turns reminding me of the tragic loss in confidence and the seemingly lost ability to synthesize to completion.

In 1966 Brian guessed that he just wasn't made for the times, so he created musical tracks which producers and songwriters in 1980 have yet to surpass in terms of sublime lyricism, textures and artistic vision. But Brian Wilson in 1980? The tracks which Brian lays down these days contain typical Brian Wilson sounds, while their critical success is untypically negligible. In 1865 popular author Charles Dickens, then in the later years of his career, would sustain the criticism of Henry James, who was prompted by the release of Dickens' Our Mutual Friend to proclaim the great wrong of the critical world's applying to Dickens the title of one of England's greater novelists. Just as we now enjoy the virtues of Our Mutual Friend along with Dickens' other works without recourse to James' unfortunate thesis, so in years to come, it is my guess that we will revel in the joyous

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Editor Donald Cunningham Graphics Greg Szyszkowski

Contributing Editors D-Boy  
Michael Bocchini  
Tom Ekwurtzel

Business and Advertising  
Janet Houldcroft

Photography Brian Berry  
John Galvin  
David Houldcroft

Graphics Greg Szyszkowski  
Contributors D-Boy  
Gary Gidman  
Dina Maggipinto  
Andrew G. Doe  
Valuable Assistance  
Janice Capocci  
Stephen McParland  
Andrew Bainborough  
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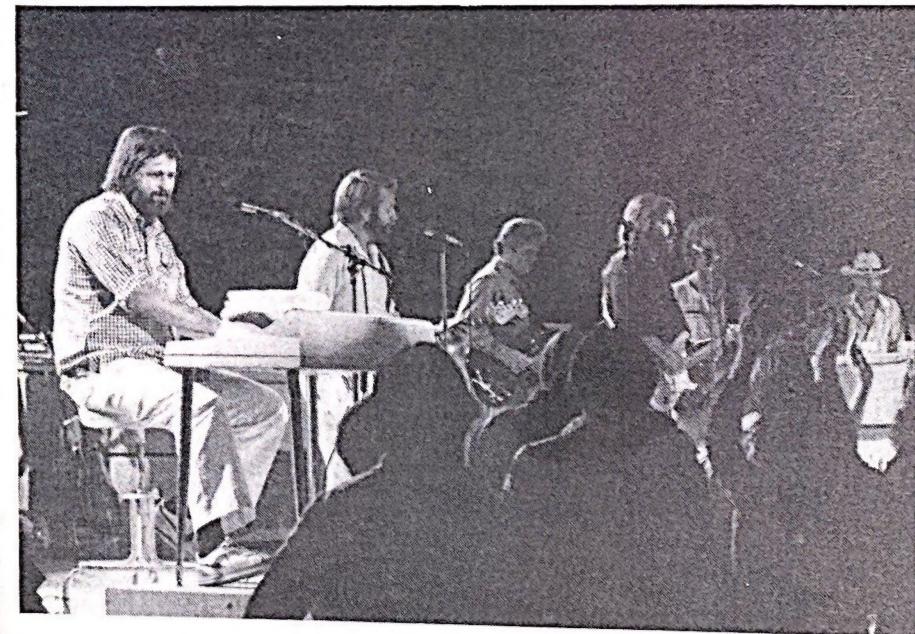
sounds of the undervalued "Hey Little Tomboy" alongside "Wouldn't It Be Nice" and the rest.

This issue is highlighted by Mike Bocchini's careful re-examination of the 1971 Surf's Up album. Gary Gidman continues his scan of artists in the Brian Wilson school while Don Cunningham listens to "Heroes and Villains." In addition Dina Maggipinto took a ride up to an amusement park to report on Jan and Dean while the enigmatic D-Boy begins a new column, The Spector Niche, by reviewing a recent compilation of Phil Spector productions. We'd like to thank all our readers who wait patiently while we put the magazine together. Please keep the letters coming in.

## Music Update

Attendance figures for the July fourth Beach Boys concert at the Washington Monument reached 500,000. Home Box Office, the pay television network, videotaped the concert and will be offering it to viewers in October.

The band will begin touring again October 17 with a swing through Nevada, Utah and Montana. Brian Wilson was absent



from the last tour in August due to physical ailments but is recovered and has done work in the studio. He did some writing during a month's stay in Hawaii by himself. A couple of months back Brian cut seven tracks at the Santa Barbara studio including "Be My Baby," "River Deep, Mountain High," and five originals.

There is no news of an upcoming album. Carl Wilson has been working on his solo album at the Caribou Ranch with Jim Guercio producing. Carl has been collaborating with lyricist Myrna Smith of the Sweet Inspirations. Bruce Johnston has his own production company now and has recorded a group that includes Peter Noone, former vocalist with the group Herman's Hermits. Dennis and Mike seem to be getting along just fine.

Terry Melcher's name has come up as a possible producer of new Beach Boy product. Bruce Johnston's involvement as producer of Keepin' The Summer Alive included re-recording "Oh Darlin'" which had a vocal by Brian originally, and re-arranging "Goin' On," a Brian Wilson arrangement of which is in the can. Although the band wanted "Keepin' The Summer Alive" to be the next single release, and CBS was pushing for "School Days," nothing has been released since the ill-fated "Livin' With A Heartache."

A quote by Paul McCartney in the August issue of Musician merits repeating here. When asked how did Sergeant Pepper come about, McCartney replied: "I think the big influence was Pet Sounds by the Beach Boys. That album just flipped me. Still is one of my favorite albums - the musical invention on that is just amazing. I play it for our kids now and they love it. When I heard it I thought 'Oh dear, this is the album of all time. What the hell are we going to do?' My ideas took off from that standard."

The Beach Boys may perform in the Los Angeles bicentennial celebration October 11-12. The bill for that festival will include Jan and Dean and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Tapes of the Smile album were played over the airplane sound system during a Beach Boy flight in the Midwest. Reportedly management is in favor of getting the Smile album out, yet it remains Brian's project and Brian's decision. "You Are My Sunshine" and "Can't Wait Too Long" are complete while "Do You Like Worms" is close to completion. Perhaps in 1981, the Beach Boys' twentieth anniversary, we will see the release of that project. Write to your congressman. The band is planning well into the future these days.

There is a "Goin' On" tv promotional spot shown in some areas that shows Brian and Carl on the Beach -Brian in fashionable plaid jacket and running pants. It includes the

recent Rolling Stone "Random Notes" interview in which Brian bared his soul by proclaiming "I like looking at the keys," and "I like arguments -other peoples'." The group is shown lip synching "Goin' On."

In a British radio interview Roger Daltrey, vocalist for the Who, stated that Keith Moon almost approached the Beach Boys in 1974 with the idea of becoming their drummer. (Dennis was incapacitated at the time)(thanks Andrew B.)

The Beach Boys will be included in a British 5-album compilation that features various artists performing live over the last twenty years at the famous Rainbow Theatre in England.

A brand new Ronnie Spector album appropriately (belatedly) entitled Siren is out, produced by artist Genya Ravan.

A straightforward remake of "Darlin'" by Yipes, a new wave band recently spent time in the lower ranges of the Billboard chart (Millenium 11791). It is characterized by a heavy and fast disco-like drum beat, garage band electric guitar arpeggios a la Beatles, and a throaty, nonlyrical lead vocal (a la new wave). Otherwise the arrangement is true to Brian's. In paying tribute to the essential Rock and Roll content of this Brian Wilson song, Yipes' version is successful, yet gains no ground on Brian's 1967 creation.

The 1976 Saturday Night Live show hosted by Jodie Foster and featuring Brian Wilson as sole musical guest was shown again in early September. Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to show the final song from the original -that being the meaningful, albeit pathetic solo rendition of "Good Vibrations."

The ABC-tv news magazine 20/20 ran their story on the Beach Boys October 2. It proved to be an excellent biographical outline filled in with 1980 concert shots and interviews. Highlights included old footage of the Ed Sullivan show and the movie "The Girls On The Beach," as well as a recent Brian Wilson playing the piano beardless and mugging it up for the cameras. The most precious segments, however, were (1) Brian Wilson describing the effect of the arrangement in "Good Vibrations," and (2)the entire group minus Dennis teaching their individual parts in the harmony of "Their Hearts Were Full Of Spring." Afterwards they joined in together with Brian's voice on top. ABC described the vicissitudes of the band with accuracy and good taste, and although the Smile debacle was omitted, the title and song list of Pet Sounds adorned the screen for a time in a fitting tribute. Glen Campbell was not mentioned. Sorry.

## Surf's Up

by Michael Bocchini

In 1971 the Beach Boys released their second album for Warner/Reprise, Surf's Up. Conditions could not have appeared worse. Brian remained in his self-imposed exile, and Dennis, whose work had shown great promise on Sunflower, had injured his hand in an accidental confrontation with a glass door. But working under the amorphous production credit of "The Beach Boys," the group completed a surprisingly unified and satisfying work.

The original release of Surf's Up included an insert which contains the album's lyrics backed by a brown-tint photograph of an arid landscape. This insert is the group's first published set of lyrics to accompany an album and first published attempt to involve the listener visually with the thematic content of the L.P.

The insert photograph and "Don't Go Near The Water" borrow from the epic convention of beginning the telling of a story in the middle rather than the start. In every measure of life-social, ecological, artistic, psychological, the decade of the sixties had forced man to confront the abuses of the past. Images of chaos and impending disaster had resulted in a psychic overload and shutdown. The vision of an arid landscape whose texture had been cracked apart and the plaintive voices of Beach Boys which describe corruption of the water summarize an era of ecological, social and self abuse.

The album rejects the fixed image of a neverending wasteland, however. In beautifully realized integration, Surf's Up calls its listener to action. The rejection of the working title Landlocked emerges as a thematic choice, not just a note of homage to Brian's contribution from Smile. Hope waits at the end of Surf's Up's musical quest. Landlocked despair characterizes its starting point.

"Let's all help the water  
Right away  
Do what we can and ought to  
Let's start today."

Repairing the cracked fabric of a world view does not come easily. Each working member of the group confronts the task in a highly personalized manner which results in a unified mosaic of understandably human responses. Carl collaborated with Jack Rieley on "Long Promised Road" and "Feel Flows" to produce a mystical and metaphorical response. Al Jardine collaborated with Gary Winfrey to produce a clear and craftsmanlike everyman response. Bruce Johnston contributed "Disney Girls (1957)" with its lush, nostalgic response, and Mike Love contributed "Student Demonstration Time" which counsels retreat.

Brian Wilson's three contributions serve as a reprise of the album's movement through problem, despair and hope. Ironically, the self-exiled member, least able to cope with existent reality, contributes the cement which binds when he reaches back to 1966 and Surf's Up.

"Long Promised Road" is composed with an AB-AB-C-AB\*BB structure. Each A movement begins with Carl's soft voice and an even softer harmony. In this mood the song speaks of the difficulty of the human spirit in rising above immediate images of pain.

"So hard to laugh a child-like giggle  
When the tears start to torture my mind."

However, Carl's voice, the harmonies, and the instrumentation rise to a harder rock sound as they slip into the B movements to "hit hard at the battle that's confronting" them.

This point/counterpoint continues until the C movement. At the center of the pain and struggle rests the long promised road which "flows to the source, (a) gentle force never ending." Here, Carl's voice is gentle and reassuring as the harmonies and rippling organ promise tranquility at the end of a struggle to liberate a person from "the pain of growing in soul/Of climbing up reality's goal." The problems remain, hence the final A. But the struggle is joined with renewed vigor as the song ends with three consecutive and consecutively stronger B movements.

Carl and Jack Rieley complete "Long Promised Road"'s movement with "Feel Flows," which begins Surf's Up's second side. Now any point/counterpoint stridency has been removed. Every production element radiates tranquility and harmony. The images of suffering remain: clouds, wind. Threatening questions confront: whether heaven's hopes will never return nor surface joy ever be found. However, they fade in significance when one can "Feel Flows."

Carl's voice contains no yea/nay emotions as he sings of consolation and strife. Alliteration and rhyme blend them into a oneness as the instrumentation undulates and the harmony unifies. The song speaks of a divinity which lies within and without all things and directs all events. To be in touch with this flow is to liberate through surrender.

The song's instrumental break is dominated by the airy flute of Charles Lloyd. The past dominates in the Renaissance flavor of the flute, the present is fittingly brief in the form of a short piano riff, and the no longer fearful future, in the form of a synthesizer, joins the flute and piano as the now familiar undulating chords continue throughout the break and into the song's resolution. All man sees as separate is one: feel flows.

With the richness and profundity of Carl's contribution to the album's concept one might overlook the solid nature of Al Jardine's efforts. His metaphors may not be as complex, but their meanings are necessary to an appreciation of the whole. The problems of the arid world touch every man, not just the philosopher.

"Take A Load Off Your Feet" may borrow its car horns and assorted banging pipe sounds from the Spike Jones school of musical effects, yet its thematic intent is dead but not deadly serious. Getting lost in those twinkled, wrinkled toes leaves one unmindful of the "piece of glass" and "treacherous blows." The cutting refrain, "Better take care of your life/ 'cause nobody else will," is not devoid of social criticism and cynical advice on the part of a persona who has seen more than his share of world hurt.

"Looking At Tomorrow (A Welfare Song)" follows "Feel Flows" and serves as a fine companion piece. The song treats darkness and light, disappointment and fulfillment, and work and repose with the evenhandedness of "Feel Flows," and Al's characteristic simplicity and clarity. No divinity shapes this serenity; the love of a man and a woman replenishes man and assuages the harshness of modern existence.

Bruce Johnston's "Disney Girls (1957)" and Mike Love's "Student Demonstration Time" are given a rich ironic tone when viewed in their thematic context. Again, the familiar problems of the world weary take center stage, then are pushed aside by tentative solutions.

"Disney Girls (1957)," like "Looking At Tomorrow," offers love as a solution. "Now I see your smile/Darkness goes and softness shows." But Johnston's is not the love that must face hardship. "Reality, it's not for me...Fantasy world and Disney girls/I'm coming back." The escapist world of TV and a nostalgic past which never existed is offered as a hollow solution. Rick and Dave and Pop's ice cream would quickly melt on the landscape pictured on the album's insert.

This dream is as soft and beautiful as Johnston's song and as fragile as Johnston's voice. The song's production displays the lush richness of the Beach Boys at their harmonic best. Here exists a peaceful world of "pillow fights" and soft laughter. As the song fades with its soft whistling one is tempted to join this beautiful escapism and forget the reality which surrounds this fragile balance.

"Student Demonstration Time" allows no such escape. The world is a cell block and humanity the prisoners. Horns blair, sirens wail, a piano throbs, and guitars blast to crush Johnston's airy bubble. Love catalogues the trauma of the recent past to thrust stridently the picture insert once more into the listener's view. Rick and Dave and Pop must give

way to TV's new world of violence, completely unrehearsed, on the evening news. The positioning of these songs at the close of side one enhances the value of "Feel Flows" at the top of the second side.

Brian Wilson's contribution to Surf's Up constitutes a trilogy of reprise. The condition of the ecology is personified in the voice of a dying tree in "A Day In The Life Of A Tree." The performance by Jack Rieley on the lead vocal is raspy and broken, yet the lyric speaks poignantly of the interdependence of man and nature. The harming of nature is characterized as an act of self abuse.

"...now my branches suffer  
And my leaves don't offer  
Poetry to men of song."

The funereal sound of the organ injects a strong note of despair into the song. Without the inspiration of nature man finds himself without the patterns of eternal rhythms from which he can fashion the songs to uplift his spirit.

Man is left without the connections necessary for an integrated life. "'Til I Die" extends this thought through a series of metaphors of this feeling of helplessness. The organ is reintroduced, but its ponderous feeling is lacking. A series of chord progressions produce the effect of an airy, slow motion movement, threatening and reassuring at the same time.



The song projects a sense of human abandonment to the forces of nature without the needed understanding of their immutable patterns. The lyric projects none of the reassurance found in the instrumentation. The music can not be divested of eternal harmonies, the intellect without the direction of natural images can.

The tree can welcome death as an end to the ravages of mankind. For death constitutes a natural and vital part of the natural cycle. But a man adrift must fear this solution. To him, death's release is only the terrifying thought of an end to existence. And his mind reverberates with this thought in contrapuntal force. "These things I'll be until I die" -the end of being. These two songs describe the natural and psychological wasteland produced by modern man.

In "Surf's Up" the themes of the album crystalize. The fact that a 1966 song speaks so eloquently to the album's topicality illustrates the timelessness of these problems and their solutions.

"Surf's Up" must be recognized as a composition of incredible richness. The song reflects awareness as the surf reflects the early morning sun. The lyric shimmers with literary and biographical allusions as the music shifts between simplicity and complexity. Voices join and separate as they rise and fall through harmony and counterpoint.

Like many of the major fragments of the Smile album, "Surf's Up" displays a concern for the American experience and its contradictions. The song's first stanza moves the American saga from Queen Isabella's opening gambit, "A diamond necklace played the pawn," through colonization, "Hand in hand some drummed along," and the blind march of expansion, "to a handsome man with a baton," on to the period of self examination as in the distorted but perceptive vision of Edgar Allan Poe, "Back through the opera glass you see/The pit and pendulum drawn." Poe spoke of the dark underside of America and his observations caused many in the nation to reexamine their most closely held values and to find them lacking, "Columinated ruins domino," and to call for a reworking of priorities. But their calls fell on deaf ears.

"Canvass the town and brush the backdrop  
Are you sleeping?"

The second stanza belongs to the autobiographical persona of Brian Wilson. A child of the American dream whose songs evoked the fullness of the American myth, Brian's persona is the voice of a man broken by success. His music has dissolved in the awareness that the price paid for his successful performance is too high.

The trumpet which triumphantly sounded the beginning of "Surf's Up" has become a muted "trumpeter's swan" song of taps, and the xylophone which underscored the allusion to Poe's

grim insight and unheeded call sounds again. For failing to understand the message of Poe (a favorite author of young Brian Wilson), Brian has been forced to live the metaphor and painfully reach awareness which shatters personal belief. The call for change is refrained with the hope that it will be embraced by the listener.

From this point "Surf's Up" is dominated by combined opposites. The lyric takes on a complexity of diction and image. Muted lights dimly illuminate the darkness and fog. Movement in such an environment threatens, yet one must cast off; "At port adieu (a do) or die" -decision has been made. No false bravado of "Don't Back Down" here. These are the movements of a broken man who steals himself for a desperate attempt at redemption.

However, throughout this lyric of stress, a simple piano, the lone instrumentation, rises from below: "a cellar tune" to guide these movements. This evenhanded instrumentation links "Surf's Up" with the undulating instrumentation of "Feel Flows" and the eternal cycles of nature.

The piano continues as voices strike a note of renewed hope -surf's up. The direction of humanity's and America's future must be changed: "Come about hard."

The solutions rest with man's earliest encounters with his environment. In the rhythms of spring renewal can be found. In a children's song redemption can be found. The remembered simplicity of nature's renewal and the simple beauty of a child's song of love connect man with the faith to restore the landscape and his psyche.

In the middle of the 1800's William Wordsworth faced the ravages of the Industrial Revolution and his poetry spoke of the dangers of man's reckless pursuit of profit and progress.

"...we lay waste our powers  
Little we see in nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away..."

In the introduction to his now famous poem, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," which presents the nineteenth century with his solution to its dilemma, he writes:

"The child is father of the man  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety."

Wordsworth's ode also mentions a tree which speaks of "something missing." The inspiration of the Van Dyke Parks/Brian Wilson collaboration is not in doubt.

As "Surf's Up" and Surf's Up reach a conclusion, voices meet in counterpoint as though the various voices of enlight-

erment throughout the ages come forth with their consistent message of hope and direction.

"The child is the father of the man:  
A children's song  
Have you listened as they play?  
Their song is love  
And the children know the way."

Perhaps no other rock album of the seventies addresses itself so thoroughly to the challenge of modern societies. The disparate personalities and talents of the Beach Boys coalesced to produce an album of harmonious insight and musical accomplishment and an album whose message and art remains largely unheeded and unheralded.

#### **The Spector Niche** Phil Spector 74/79 (Polydor 2307 015)

The great songwriter spends his life writing one song. It's all a variation on a theme, but even moreso a lifelong attempt to master that one monument which an individual talent promises. In pointing to one great song in the artist's repertoire you will probably find the most successful or closest attempt at the monument. However, less successful songs may have captured single pieces of the monument's essence by themselves. For McCartney there is "Yesterday," for Wilson perhaps "Good Vibrations." For Phil Spector it could have been "Be My Baby" as done by the Ronettes in 1963. If so, the question becomes -where does that leave Spector's "Uptown," "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'," and "River Deep, Mountain High?" The additional works of Spector and other great artists are equally worthy of praise and enjoyment since in an attempt to construct the monument the great artists are successful in creating the vision of the monument even as they don't actually build it. Like a holographic picture in which each fraction of the picture contains the substance of the entire picture, so the minor works of an artist like Phil Spector give evidence for the monument in his mind.

That is why the Polydor release of last year, Phil Spector 74/79 is important. The songs on this album are admittedly inferior to Phil's better works with the Ronettes, Righteous Brothers, and Ike and Tina, yet at times they invoke the legendary Spector goal of the "wall of sound" image -musical apotheosis. He would have us go to heaven via melody, harmony, rhythm and texture.

The standout on this set is "Here It Comes" by Jerri Bo Keno. Here is a well controlled Spector production with a look to the past and a sense of maturity. Not simply a "wall

of sound," but a careful selection of "wall of sound" sounds. It is a fully realized song idea including an odd, sensual vocal.

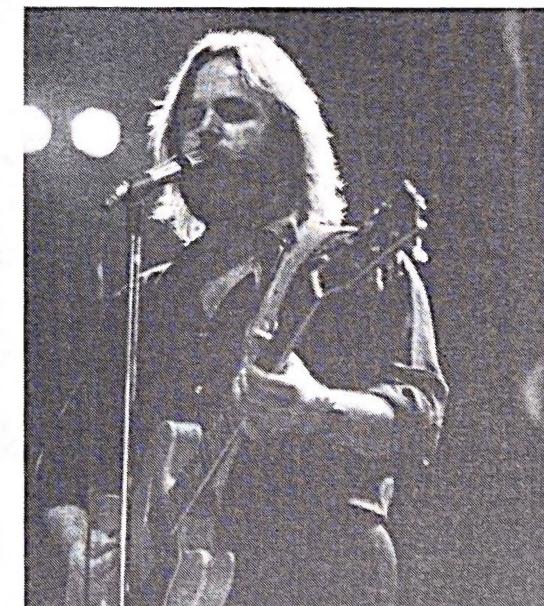
Nilsson and Cher's "A Love Like Yours" pales miserably next to the original by Ike and Tina Turner. Cher has some what better success with "A Woman's Story," a gospel-ly attempt at Spector apotheosis which nevertheless does not quite ascend. Cher's best shot is with a careful, slow, and surprisingly charming production of "Baby I Love You" -a notable Spector remake. This is done with love and is of much greater interest than the recent, almost parodistic track Spector made with the Ramones.

Three songs taken from the 1976 collaboration of Dion and Spector reveal the problems with that project; the lack of internal and external excitement, the awkward chemistry which manages to hide both talents.

Finally, there are two songs by Darlene Love. The first, "Lord, If You're A Woman," has a moving vocal and rich production but lacks a middle that flies. The second, "I Love Him Like I Love My Very Life," is classic Spector, inside out, ushering the listener back to 1964.

Unfortunately missing from this recent collection of Spector productions is any evidence for Spector's 1977 collaboration with Leonard Cohen. The product of that matchup, in my opinion was a showcase of talents, a truly successful collaboration.

D-Boy



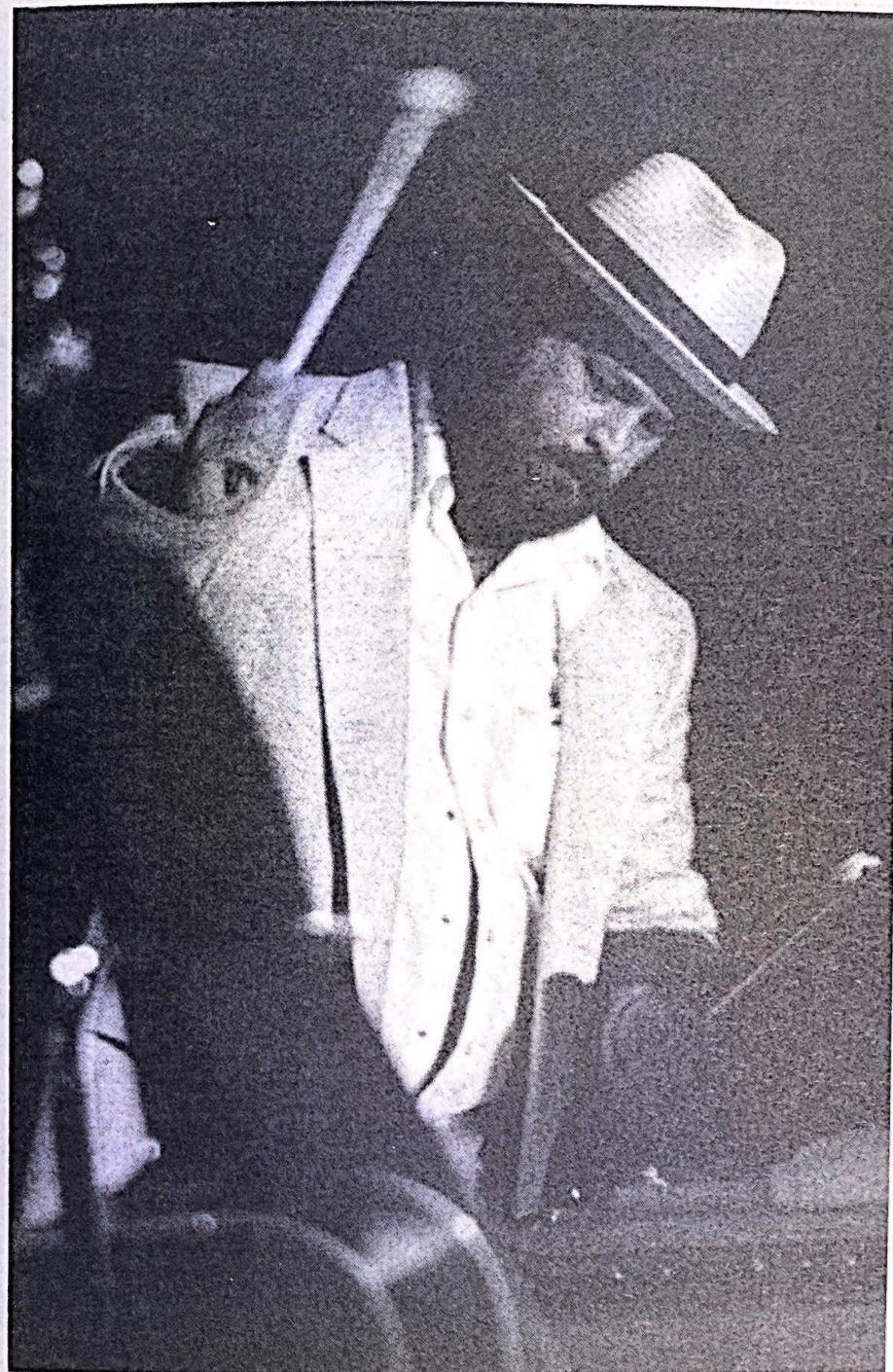
## The Brian Wilson School II

by Gary Gidman

In my first article I covered some British artists who have been undoubtedly caught up in the Brian Wilson school of songwriting, arranging, producing, etc. Here I present some American artists with a similar fate. It might be noted here that there is a distinct difference in the tones of reverence between American and British artists - a difference which mirrors the more general public's attitude toward Brian's music. With the British artists the tribute is more passionate and unabashed, reflecting a greater acceptance by Britons. The American artists are more sparing in their admittance of Brian's influence, so that they at times appear exploitative of Brian's virtues.

Wildfire, a band from the Hendersonville, Tennessee area, recorded one LP, Flame Thrower, on the Casablanca label (7074) in 1977. Sadly, schizophrenic production values impair several cuts, but there are some good songs here. "Back To The Beach" is a rouser, driven by a honky-tonk piano, strong vocals, and a bouncy chorus, with a baritone harmonica thrown in for added flavor. "Sarah" has that straight-ahead power of "Darlin'," though not as strong melodically, and I wish the bass line had more movement. "Here Comes Summer" is a compositional cousin to "Back To The Beach," and as such receives appropriate treatment. "Feeling Love," a ballad, starts out sounding like something right out of an 'Adult Radio Programmer's Manual,' very AM, almost Eagles-like, but by the fade the vocals have filled out, added a high descent, and we are left with a very charming 'tag' ending. Also included on the LP is a faithful cover of "Breakaway," crediting Murray Wilson rather than "Reggie Dunbar," and employing another tag, a modified chorus of six bars. These songs are well done - obviously more time was spent on them than on the remainder of the record, which sounds thinner, raunchier (some cuts feature deliberately distorted vocals), and seems aesthetically at odds with the body of music reviewed here.

Turning our attention northward, we find Billy and Bobby Alessi, identical twins hailing from Long Island. In the early seventies they comprised half of Barnaby Bye, a band which cut two LP's for Atlantic (now deleted), and shortly thereafter began work as a duo for A&M. Their sound generally features their vocals many times overdubbed in thick harmonies, a very smooth sound since their voices are as much alike as their faces. While their stylistic approach tends to be "Pop" from a New York aesthetic, they obviously recognize a debt to Brian's arrangement style, and from their first LP, Alessi (SP4608), through to their most recent, Words and Music (SP4776), they have followed the tradition of vocals as the main focus of the recording. The arrangements leave little doubt that the Beach Boys, rather than East coast rivals, the Four Seasons, are the prevailing influence here. Counterpoint abounds on many Alessi songs, such as "Big Deal,"



with its chorus of the word "baby" tossed between singers like a ball. "Don't Hold Back" features the line "Dit-dit-dit-darlin'" obviously reworking Brian's chorus harmony.

While each of their albums has offered a pleasing amount of this vocal work, only occasionally has a song surfaced which seems itself to be a product of Brian's influence. The aforementioned "Don't Hold Back" could debatably be so categorized. Their third LP, Driftin' (Sp4713) closes with "Just Can't Stop It," which comes close, as does "Lover Boy" from the Words And Music LP. In general, I suppose it should be concluded that Alessi is forging its own style of composition, but packages it in such a way that it is worthy of being talked about on the pages of this magazine.

I was introduced to Flash Cadillac and the Continental Kids by the "Tonight" TV show. Lords of Flatbush (really from Colorado?), sneering and popping bubble gum, they built a human pyramid onstage while they sang, sort of, "Roll Over Beethoven." I laughed, but I didn't buy their LP. Recently I picked up their second album, Sons Of The Beaches (Private Stock 2003, now deleted) from the bargain bin, and I was surprised. While I couldn't find anything palatable on side two, and I've got a few complaints about side one, there is some interesting stuff here. A trio of songs, "Time Will Tell," "Hot Summer Girls," and "It's A Summer Night" all feature good vocals. "Time Will Tell" has a neat acapella break reminiscent of "I Can Hear Music." The three songs are connected by sound effects. A cuckoo clock sounds the hour, the back door creaks open, and the sounds of Redondo Beach signal the beginning of "Hot Summer Girls," which in turn is taken by a bevy of wheeling seagulls into "It's A Summer Night." That sums up the pros. Their rendition of the Sloan/Barri classic, "Summer Means Fun," lacks the complexity of Bruce and Terry's version and the exuberance of Jan and Dean's, and the rest of the album isn't up to the musical standards set by the three songs mentioned.

Henry Gross goes for pretty much the same sound as Flash Cadillac in attempting to conjure the spirit of the Beach Boys, but he fares slightly better, probably because he writes and sings better. An alumnus of the 50's revival band, Sha Na Na, he enjoyed moderate commercial success with two pleasant facsimiles, "Shannon," and "Springtime Mama," both of which can be found on his third LP, Release (Lifesong 6002). This record also inhabits the bargain bins these days.

All of which leads us to Cleveland, Ohio, home of America's number one honor student in the Brian Wilson school, Eric Carmen. By the early seventies his band, the Raspberries, was on the verge of collapse. Although they were known for Beatlesque top 40 fare, their last album, Starting Over, included two of Eric's homework projects, "Cruising Music,"

and "Overnight Sensation." The latter song has a coda which enters through a transistor radio speaker, surges and dies down to a single piano arpeggio, only to come crashing back for the fade. The vocal harmonies, while an accurate approximation of Brian's practices, in retrospect must have been only warmups for Eric's first solo LP on Arista. "My Girl" features a refrain that rivals "Marcella" or "Funky Pretty" in the sheer complexity of the vocal counterpoint. "Sunrise," a straightforward Pop rocker is framed with a symphonic intro and a paraphrased "Saturday Night's Alright..." (Elton John) coda riff. "Last Night," with its delightful "ditits" in the choruses, takes Brian's famous 'wonder of the mundane' lyric approach and twists it, coming up with a verse and bridge lyric which categorically rattles off the day's activities. It includes going to the drugstore, playing some records, reading a magazine, and a chorus which puts it in perspective as being wasted time, waiting for, or missing a girlfriend. The arrangement of "On Broadway" fires the imagination. Is Brian's unreleased version anything like this?

One striking thing about Eric Carmen is that his compositional style complements his arrangements moreso than anyone else dealt with here. Piano is usually the central instrument in the arrangements, and the left hand favors a figured bass employing frequent suspensions (putting a chord against a bass note other than the root pitch, or other than other pitches in the chord), one of Brian's most common practices.

Eric's second LP, Boats Against The Current (Arista 4124), continues much in the same vein as its predecessor, but with one difference. The vocal arrangements on the songs "She Did It," "I Think I Found Myself," and the lovely, although mixed down, coda of "Love Is All That Matters" were done, and partially sung by Beach Boy Bruce Johnston. "She Did It" in particular is a fine recording, probably Eric's finest tribute to Brian's influence. The next album, Change Of Heart, sees a turn in the road just commencing. There are two cuts of some merit, "Someday," and "Hey Deanie," which teen star Shaun Cassidy covered with some commercial success. Eric's latest offering, Tonight You're Mine, takes on a new musical tack, sort of a more visceral, less sophisticated Billy Joel. Whatever the reasons for this change, the result is our loss.

Eric has done one thing recently which deserves mention here. That is the record by the Euclid Beach Band which he produced on Epic. Essentially a duo from Cleveland, one of whom, Richard Reising, once served as a guitarist in Eric's band, they fall into Eric's mold fairly well, though they need improvement in their songwriting. The obvious standout, overshadowing all else on the LP, is the stunning "No Surf In Cleveland," a bundle of fun complete with surfing guitars, a modulated solo, "I Get Around" handclaps, and full vocals drowned in echo. A worthwhile addition to any record library, it conjures the sound and spirit, if not the actual substance

of the Beach Boys almost better than Eric himself.

In these first two articles on the Brian Wilson school I have gathered British and American artists working with very obvious and severe Brian Wilson influences. I would like to leave the door open for a future piece which would deal with more subtle cases of Brian Wilson influence as well as one-shot occurrences like First Class and B.J. Thomas.

### Song Scrutiny

by Donald Cunningham

A famous story describes Brian Wilson's taking the final mixdown and arrangement of "Heroes and Villains" to a nearby radio station for a rare, late-night preview in 1967. In a gesture symbolic of the creative content of that long awaited Brian Wilson release the artist and retinue traveled in a limousine caravan to the radio station where they were denied admittance. Brian had even considered the predominant astrological features in choosing that night, but he was shut down anyway. They say he was crushed. My feeling has always been that the disc jockey who rebuffed Brian Wilson that night stopped the six year upward spiral of Brian's achievements. The phenomenal rise had begun with "Surfer Girl" and "Surfin' Safari," and in 1965-66 escalated exponentially with Pet Sounds and Smile. After "Heroes and Villains" the magic carpet ride was no more, and we would instead be treated over the following years to all too infrequent and tantalizing new songs ("This Whole World," "'Til I Die") and Smile fragments ("Cabinessence," "Surf's Up").

At times Brian's genius would surface but its scope of implementation would prove to be severely curtailed. In place of albums which would make quantum jumps in the creative Pop music world Brian's genius would, in humble guise create a short, R&B flavored album suffused with warm humor (Wild Honey), or an album filled with rich, honest harmonies as metaphor for the fruits of simple kindness (Friends), or an album in which plodding synthesizer and rare percussion would be sufficient to describe a man smiling through tears (The Beach Boys Love You). After "Heroes and Villains" there would be no further attempts to reign as artist supreme in the creative Pop music scene.

"Heroes and Villains" did well on the 1967 charts (#12) - testimony, don't forget, to Brian's uncanny ability back then to push the limits of Pop while remaining just that popular. It was the only hit with lyrics by Van Dyke Parks - and possibly the only Beach Boy hit with lyrics which were not immediately understandable. It was the Beach Boy song with the greatest percentage of nonsense syllables and a surprising percentage of acapella singing. It was a Beach Boy song in the key of D-flat. It was a severe abridgement of a much larger opus destined for the dusty Smile vault.

Who knows what "Heroes and Villains" might have sounded like on the Smile album, although abrupt edits heard in the common edition offer evidence for points of departure. In the released version, distilled for AM radio play, we find the following structure: AABA'A"A"A" B-fade. The A sections contain the quickly sung story line based on a humorous melodic descent longer than an octave. Each time the key progression is a basic D-flat, E-flat, A-flat, D-flat. A bridge of minor character shifts into the B sections which have a related plot: E-flat minor, A-flat, E-flat minor, A-flat, F, E-flat minor. The next A sections, prime and double prime, have few words. First a "la la la" lyric, reminiscent of the "na na na's" in "Good Vibrations" climbs down the initial melodic line before yielding to a vocal of words. The second time around acapella "doo doo doo's" weave a polyphonic story which plays off the original A section idea. After another bridge the song returns to that first idea with "My children were raised, you know, ..." The realization surfaces here that Brian is creating musical plot in a large way by causing the basic refrain of the story (A) to constantly evolve. The first time around the nebulous lyrics follow what would turn out to be the most straightforward and simplistic musical arrangement. The middle A sections portray an acquiescence of lyrical ideas (Park's) to the more powerful and meaningful interplay of sounds in Brian's polyphonic nonsense syllables.



In the final time around lyrics return, but Brian is found experimenting with the rhythmic structure with the result that if one does not understand sufficiently, "My children were raised..." and "I've been in this town..." one nevertheless glean the intent from the slowing down of tempo. A questioning lament results, introduced by another bridge of minor character.

This slowing down again reminds one of "Good Vibrations" and, as in that song the ponderous section yields to a final burst of energy, in this case the B section again, which fades. The final chords of the fade are appropriately minors which leave one with a taste of wonderment rather than total resolution.

The mix on "Heroes and Villains" is cause for frustration to lovers of Brian's instrumental and vocal production techniques. The instruments are pushed way back and the vocals, while up front, have a certain insouciance of their own -they don't jump out of the speakers as do the voices on "Don't Worry Baby" and "Keep An Eye On Summer." Although magnificent vocal counterpoint is the main character in "Heroes and Villains", one is forced to listen hard in searching for nuances of that counterpoint. Individual voices refuse to take precedence over one another, thereby yielding to a more noticeable overall vocal character. Each hero and villain is given a line somewhere, but each voice is lost in the bigger picture of the legacy left by the exploits of those heroes and villains.

A Stack-O-Tracks version of "Heroes and Villains" would be much appreciated for we could then hear with greater clarity those sounds Brian chose to push back in the mix. The bass (guitar and organ) is most evident in the song's opening statement as a driving, pulsating element, life source of the heroes and villains. Other keyboards become variously evident. I especially enjoy the organ audible at the end of A-section phrases which is possibly the legendary "empty swimming pool" echo style. Then there is the unique harpsichord sound in the middle eight.

What must be said of the vocals? Perhaps that Brian had come a long way from the Four Freshmen in a few short years. His ability to use the voices as instruments reaches a peak in this song. In terms of the usage of sonorities at hand Brian's manipulation of those untrained, Hawthorne voices is as impressive as Beethoven's use of violin, clarinet, and other classical instruments. The efficiency and effect of the counterpoint in the B sections is almost too much to believe. In the developmental A sections I hear twenty voices, yet at the same time I hear one voice, and it sure sounds like Brian.

The interpretation of Van Dyke Parks' lyrics in "Heroes and Villains" could constitute another thesis altogether. Two things come to mind in summing up his work. He gave this song lyrics steeped in allegory and humor, reaching for a meaning which encompasses the American experience -in much the same way that the entire Smile album would have. Secondly, his words blended successfully with Brian's production. In the dream-like and timeless qualities of the gunfight and the comic confidence of the protagonist "fit with the stuff to ride in the rough" Parks makes grand allusion to the contradictory nature of our American character, with both precision and economy.

In concert the Beach Boys sing the so-called "Bicycle Rider" lyrics during the break in "Heroes and Villains."

"Heroes and villains, just see what you've done.  
Bicycle rider, see, see what you've done,  
To the church of American Indians."

"Bicycle Rider" is sometimes given credit as being another complete song on Smile. That, or perhaps it played a larger role in the longer version of "Heroes and Villains."

Although originally Brian's lead, in concert "Heroes and Villains" has come to be Al's number, and a good job he does with it. His voice is complex in geographical allusion -country/city/Eastern/Western- so that he lends additional support to the song's referral to the American experience.

Along with "Surf's Up" and "Cabinessence," the abridged "Heroes and Villains" brings to mind the tragedy of the unfulfilled notions of the Smile project. If these songs are an indication, Smile would have been an artistic adventure in which complexities of sounds captured the rich fabric of the history and meaning of America. The country emerged from the eastern shore and has evolved to a point where the cultural vanguard is at the western shore. We are life which sprang from the ocean and we will return someday to that watery mass. It would have been entirely appropriate for the Smile statement to be made by an author named "The Beach Boys."

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#### Concert Review

by Dina Maggipinto

A Rolling Stone writer once put it, "In the academy of surf and music, Jan & Dean played Spike Jones to Brian Wilson's Beethoven." In a sense it is still true, even if the bands of both Spike and Ludwig appear to be on the dole in recent years.

The success story has ebbed, yet everyone is working, as evidenced on Thursday, August 21, at Riverside Park stadium in Agawam, Massachusetts, when Jan & Dean performed with their band, Papa Doo Run Run, to a modest outdoor audience. A capricious sky, with dark clouds, deep blue spaces, and a wispy half moon, was an apt ceiling for a pair of performers who know the vicissitudes of Pop music stardom all too well.

The large stage, set back in the infield of a funny car race track was too far from the audience. The last time we reported on a Jan & Dean concert was May, 1979, when, in an intimate night club atmosphere they touched the heart strings of a small, yet near capacity crowd. The larger stadium setting, while presenting a greater opportunity for excitement, also placed obstacles in the path of the audience's sentimental attachment and led to expectations which couldn't be fulfilled.

Introduced as the Sultan of Swing and Messiah of Malibu, Jan & Dean and band (Papa still being the greatest live imitators of Brian Wilson arrangements) launched into a set identical to the May, 1979 show, with the addition of two Chuck Berry tunes, "Roll Over Beethoven," and "Johnny B. Goode," and a brief attempt at the epochal "Jenny Lee," along with the added "old surf music" track, "Ride The Wild Surf."



Jan has improved in the degree of his participation in the show, doing a lot more of the singing and entreating the audience with between-song chatter like, "Hey girls, I wanna know, we've been lookin' around and we can't find --Linda." On "Dead Man's Curve" Jan now seems to be replacing pathos with theatrics. It was exhilarating to see Dean strap on a rhythm guitar half way through the set, and, like Jan, his voice seemed to have improved, even on an unseasonably cool August evening.

Because of the continued absence of that sense of comic teaming which at one time characterized Jan & Dean I find myself still asking Dean to be Mike Love in concert. Dean is funny, Dean is active, yet he can't make the crowd dance. As the group performed so many Beach Boy songs I couldn't help but wish that Mike Love would come on stage to get the crowd up.

On the other hand an appreciation of Jan & Dean lies arguably on another plane. Jan & Dean are prime examples of a rare occurrence -the rise to fame of the boys next door almost in spite of themselves. When they stand on the stage together I am reminded of the miracle of twenty plus years ago when American kids said to Jan & Dean, "Just sing like we do and we'll make you famous."

In finishing this I must report that in introducing "Sloop John B." it was stated that the song would be on the upcoming Jan & Dean and Papa Doo Run Run album, with the familiar Brian Wilson arrangement.

#### Rare Tracks

In England the second single off Keepin' The Summer Alive was "Keepin' The Summer Alive" b/w "When Girls Get Together." "Santa Ana Winds" b/w "Sunshine" was to follow that. In Japan "Some Of Your Love" b/w "Endless Harmony" was released with a beautiful picture insert which shows the band performing in Japan earlier in the year, with Brian up front playing the white grand piano.

The British LP release entitled Girls On The Beach sports pictures of the bikini-clad fans from the British singles box set. A maxi-single was taken from the album and includes "Girls On The Beach," "In My Room," and "God Only Knows" (Cap-I-6148).

Steve McParland's California Music recently reported that while Brian Wilson produced "I Do" for the Castells in 1964, a Beach Boy version also exists. It was a Shut Down Vol. II outtake. Also, "Guess I'm Dumb," the Glen Campbell song produced by Brian was also recorded by the Beach Boys, and was an outtake from the Today sessions.

There were never many Beach Boy EP's released in the United States. Juke box EP's from Shut Down Vol II, Surfer Girl, and two from The Beach Boys Today all fetch good prices. The "Four By..." EP is worth maybe ten dollars. There were

3 rarer EP's however, which are of much greater value; a record which includes two Ray Anthony songs on one side with two Beach Boy songs on the flip ("Ten Little Indians" and "Little Miss America"), a second EP with "Little Old Lady" and "Johnny B. Goode" from the Concert album, and "I Get Around" and "The Warmth Of The Sun" from the Beach Boys Songbook, and finally, a third EP with four songs from the Beach Boys Party album: "Barbara Ann," "Hully Gully," "Alley Oop," and "Papa Oom Mow Mow."(see pic)



## Letters

Sir:

It's been quite a while since I've read an issue of a Beach Boys fanzine which made me want to scream "right" -at least a half dozen times while reading it. Where do I start? How about with Aida Audeh's review of the Beach Boys on 'Fridays?' There was a visible difference in the group's morale when they did "Goin' On," as if they were suddenly in charge of what they were doing, and were enjoying it.

Brian is now and forever the Beach Boys. If the latest album is noticeably better than the Light Album it has to be because Brian was more involved. Simple. Even though I feel Brian's music is still being falsely interpreted by over-producer Bruce Johnston, you just have to be encouraged by songs like "Some Of Your Love"(even though the main hook is a direct steal from the tag to "Child Of Winter"), "Goin' On," "Sunshine," and "Santa Ana Winds"(despite mellow fellow Alan's hideous last verse).

The more involvement Brian assumes, or is 'given' him, given the circumstance, the better. I still can't help but miss the days when Brian wrote entire songs. As often as not, the truly touching songs which I like best were written by Brian. What happened to Brian's voice? He can still sing

circles around Carl and Al. Listen to Carl's vocals nowadays -he sounds like he's read all those fanzine polls about Beach Boys lead singers ("Golly, I'm soulful").

The first paragraph on page eight of the last issue is on the nose. The Beach Boys are California music, and those songs, completely separate from the Beach Boys, make a concession to a new, sophisticated California sound like that of the Eagles and Pablo Cruise. Why this now? With this sound every bit as misguided an attempt to conform to modern trends as "Here Comes The Night," one gets the impression that the Beach Boys or those in managerial control would sell their mothers to organized crime if they thought it would get them high on the charts.

I really enjoyed your mentioning the Ramones. They're not rich like the Beach Boys. They never will have the fans or critical glory of the Beach Boys, but they do have integrity. Can you imagine a Ramones disco song? The Ramones attempting a Steely Dan/Little River Band low energy song? Not on your life. The Ramones have the earnest excitement the Beach Boys used to have. There is nothing alien or original in anything the New Wave is doing. It's just real Rock and Roll (more the spirit than the finesse, but give it time). The 4/4 'punk' beat is lifted directly from Rockabilly and surf instrumentals. I've heard that the Beach Boys' Surfin' Safari album is one of the few albums of the sixties with which you can pogo all the way through. And nothing is more exciting than the fun of energized vocals.

People have forgotten that in the sixties the Beach Boys and the Beatles were the 'real thing.' Everyone else (Who, Kinks, Rolling Stones) was a pretender. Now the new generation has these 'pretenders' to listen to for authenticity. So the New Wave groups play the music of the 'pretenders' because (1)it's acceptable, (2)the vocals are easy, and (3)they don't have the Beach Boys and the Beatles. The Beatles have broken up but the Beach Boys could step right up to what is deservedly theirs. And they have an advantage -they can still sing everyone else to shame.

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Peter Townshend credits the Beach Boys with the origin of Power Pop. After all, surfers are to mods what greasers are to punks. Is it any wonder that England still treats them like heroes despite the albums they put out? -One note: I wish you would say something nice about the Rubinoos. When Aida Audeh mentioned energy she said it all.

On "Car Crazy Cutie" the mention of the use of Dennis' voice in a prominent way is something that should have been said long ago. Dennis' vocal parts are my second favorite to sing along with next to Brian's. So I can authoritatively say that Dennis' voice is often arranged to the fore for various dramatic effects. "Our Car Club," "I'm So Young," and "Girls On The Beach" come to mind off hand.

A couple of minor errors in the "Scrutiny" article are (1) "Runaround Sue" was after Dion left the Belmonts in 1962, and (2) The song "Da Doo Ron Ron" was from 1963. With the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, the Four Seasons and others all using "nonsense syllables" it is an unfair generalization to say that they were all a product of the fifties. The fifties, by the way, have been more cruelly patronized than they deserve.

Back to the Beach Boys again, I feel very hopeful about the next album. There have been subtle hints that the Beach Boys can still do it. The Beatles haven't offered their fans any of the 'magic' Andrew Doe was talking about since they split. The Beach Boys, however erratically, have given us glimpses of magic even recently. Let's all hope there's a lot more in reserve.

Thanks again. As I once told Susumu Ogata in a letter, that guy in Add Some Music makes a lot of sense. Not just "woe is us" gut level mourning, or "best since Sunflower" fairy tales. You've let me know that there is a heck of a lot left to say about the Beach Boys. Sometimes I think the writers of Add Some Music are the only people who actually listen to the records. I just want you to know that I for one really appreciate it.

Kevin Tutor  
Duncanville, Texas



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